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LDF Response

savills

Sent by email to:
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Dear Sir / Madam

LEWISHAM DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT LOCAL PLAN – RESPONSE TO INSPECTORS INITIAL QUERIES.

Thank you for the opportunity for Thames Water Utilities Ltd. (Thames Water) to comment on the above. Thames Water's Property Services function is now being delivered by Savills (UK) Limited as Thames Water's appointed supplier. Savills are therefore pleased to respond to the above consultation on behalf of Thames Water. Thames Water is the statutory water supply and waste water undertaker for London Borough of Lewisham and the following comments area made in this respect.

Thames Water's representations in respect of the Development Management Local Plan Submission Consultation in September 2013 promoted the inclusion of a policy specific to the provision of water and waste water infrastructure, or utilities infrastructure in general. Accordingly, some text along the lines suggested by Thames Water was included within the version of the Development Management Local Plan that was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination (ref: SM34), as follows:

"Water supply and sewerage infrastructure: Applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate water supply, waste water capacity and surface water drainage both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing or new users. In some circumstances it may be necessary for applicants to fund studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing water and/or waste water infrastructure. Drainage on the site should maintain the separation of foul water and surface flows. Applicants are advised to contact Thames Water to discuss the infrastructure necessary to serve the development on 0845 850277, as part of the pre-application process."

In connection with the Examination the Inspector raised a number of Initial Queries, including the following:

"Are changes along the lines suggested by the Council (SM34) and/or Thames Water necessary to make the plan sound? To what extent are such matters either

- (a) already adequately dealt with in the Development Plan, including the London Plan and the Core Strategy, and/or*
- (b) outside the scope of the planning system and covered by other regulatory regimes or the statutory responsibilities of Thames Water?"*

In response to the Inspector's questions, the Council consider that the suggested modification SM34 is not required in order to make the plan sound, given the policy coverage of water and waste water issues in the Lewisham Core Strategy and the London Plan and the fact that water supply and waste water capacity are the responsibility of Thames Water under the Water Infrastructure Act 1991.

Thames Water considers that some coverage of water and waste water issues within the Development Management Local Plan would be beneficial in respect of the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure to service development. However, it is accepted that as set out in the Council's response, issues in respect of the provision of water and waste water infrastructure to service development are to some extent covered by Core Strategy (Spatial Policy 1) and the London Plan (Policy 5.14 Water Quality and Waste Water Infrastructure).

Thames Water does wish to clarify a point in respect of the Council's response at paragraph 2.6, as follows:

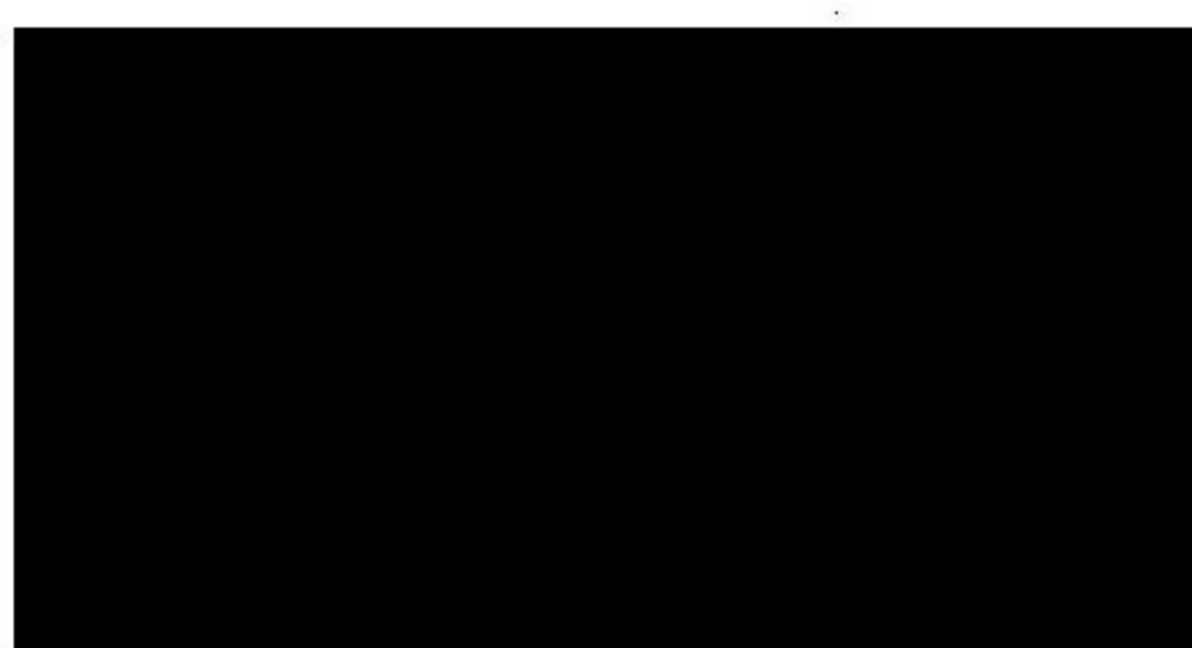
"The starting point for issues (a) and (b) is that water supply and waste water capacity are the responsibility of Thames Water under the Water Infrastructure Act 1991. Developers have a right to connect developments to the water supply and waste water system, and Thames Water has the right to charge developers a levy for this. This system is entirely outside of the planning system."

It is correct that statutory water supply undertakers including Thames Water have the right to charge developers a levy in respect of connections to the existing water supply network, however this is not the case for connections to the waste water / sewerage network. For the waste water network developers have a right of connection, providing Thames Water are notified and Thames Water have no powers to charge developers for this connection. To ensure developers connect to a point in the network which does have sufficient capacity to cater for additional flows, statutory sewerage undertakers including Thames Water rely heavily on the planning system to ensure any necessary infrastructure is provided ahead of development either through phasing or the use of planning conditions.

It is crucial that any necessary additional infrastructure is provided in time to service development to avoid unacceptable impacts on the environment such as sewage flooding of residential and commercial property, pollution of land and watercourses and this is the reason that Thames Water seeks adequate policy coverage within Development Plans.

I trust the above information is useful, please do not hesitate to contact should you have any further questions.

Yours faithfully



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